GHOST RIDER

MOTORCYCLE STUNTMAN JOHNNY BLAZE HAS ALWAYS HAD HIS HEART IN THE RIGHT PLACE... AND MADE ALL THE WRONG DECISIONS. A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL CURSED HIM INTO BECOMING THE GHOST RIDER, A SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE WHO HUNTS DOWN THE GUILTY AND DISPENSES BLOODY RETRIBUTION.

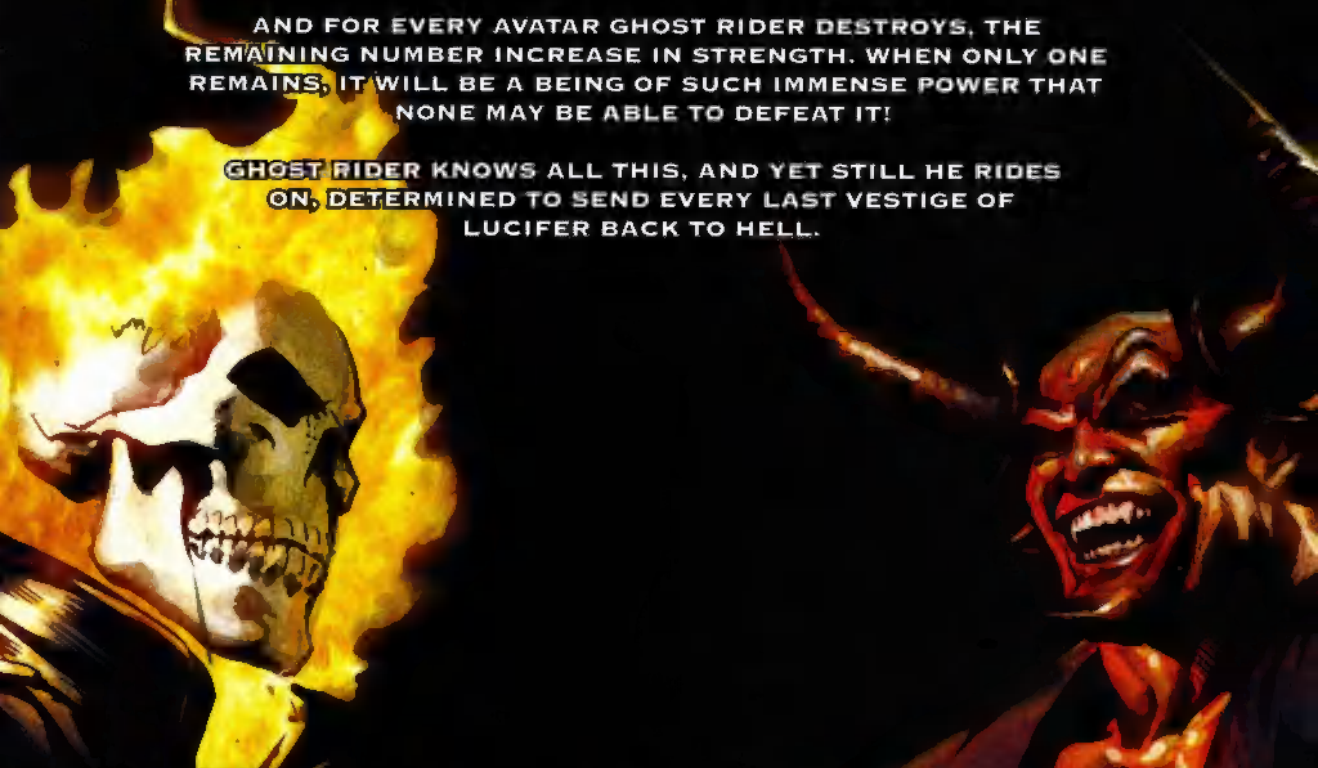
NOW HE'S GONE AND DONE IT AGAIN.

TRAPPED IN HELL AFTER BEING MANIPULATED BY ANGELS AND DEMONS ALIKE, JOHNNY MADE A BARGAIN TO ESCAPE AND INADVERTENTLY FREED LUCIFER, THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS.

DURING THE PASSAGE TO THE PHYSICAL WORLD, LUCIFER'S BODY SCATTERED INTO 666 PIECES, EACH OF WHICH POSSESSED A RECENTLY DECEASED CORPSE. EACH POSSESSED VICTIM ALLOWS LUCIFER TO WREAK HAVOC ACROSS THE GLOBE SIMULTANEOUSLY—TO KILL, TO MAIM, TO TORTURE.

AND FOR EVERY AVATAR GHOST RIDER DESTROYS, THE REMAINING NUMBER INCREASE IN STRENGTH. WHEN ONLY ONE REMAINS, IT WILL BE A BEING OF SUCH IMMENSE POWER THAT NONE MAY BE ABLE TO DEFEAT IT!

GHOST RIDER KNOWS ALL THIS, AND YET STILL HE RIDES ON, DETERMINED TO SEND EVERY LAST VESTIGE OF LUCIFER BACK TO HELL.



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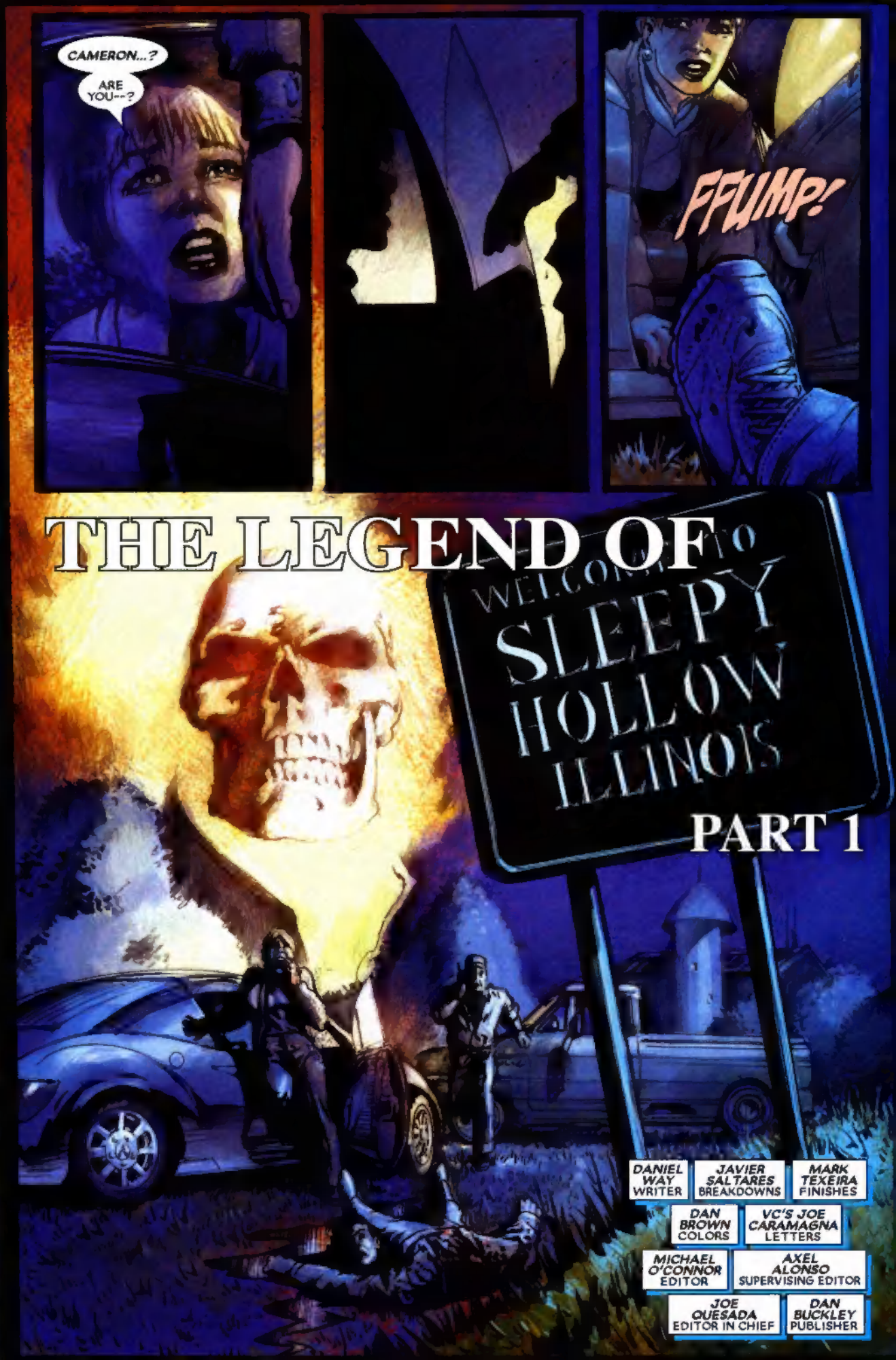
EEWWRRR
ROOOMMMM!
CAMERON, YOU'RE SCARING ME!
I JUST WANNA GO HOME, OKAY? AND IF YOU'RE NOT GONNA TAKE ME--NOW--I'M CALLING MY DAD!
DID YOU HEAR ME, CAMERON?
I'M CALLING MY--
SKKRREEEE


CAMERON...?
ARE YOU---?
FFUMP!
THE LEGEND OF
WELCOME TO
SLEEPY HOLLOW ILLINOIS
PART 1
DANIEL WAY WRITER
JAVIER SALTARES BREAKDOWNS
MARK TEXEIRA FINISHES
DAN BROWN COLORS
VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA LETTERS
MICHAEL O'CONNOR EDITOR
AXEL ALONSO SUPERVISING EDITOR
JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER

Early The Next Morning:
THE WORLD JUST KEEPS GETTING MORE AND MORE %$%#ED-UP EVERY DAY, DOESN'T IT?
ALL THAT SUPER-HERO STUFF GOING ON IN NEW YORK...WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LEVINS BOY--
WHO?
MARTY AND PHYLLIS LEVINS' SON, STEVEN.
OH, YEAH... I HEARD ABOUT THAT. TERRIBLE.
HAVE THEY HAD THE FUNERAL YET?
IT WAS LAST WEEK. IT WASN'T IN THE PAPER...I THINK THEY JUST DIDN'T WANT TO CALL ATTENTION TO IT BECAUSE OF THE TROUBLES THE BOY HAD WITH THE LAW.
HE'D BEEN IN PRISON BEFORE, ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
MM-HMM.
--AND NOW THIS.
I MOVED MY FAMILY OUT HERE TO GET AWAY FROM ALL THIS!
DO THEY KNOW ANYTHING, YET? HAVE YOU TALKED TO THE SHERIFF?
HARRY? NO, AN' I DOUBT ANYONE WILL UNTIL HE FINDS OUT WHO KILLED HIS GODSON.
KID LIKE THAT? COULD'VE BEEN ANY--
CAREFUL, ARCHIE...WE ALL KNOW THAT CAMERON FILLARDI WASN'T EXACTLY AN ANGEL, BUT THAT DON'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT HIS FATHER WAS PETE FILLARDI, HARRY'S OLD PARTNER.
HARRY SWORE TO LOOK OUT FOR THE BOY AFTER PETE DIED.
YEAH... GEEZ.
I WONDER HOW HE'S GONNA HANDLE THIS?

"WELL, HARRY'S NOT EXACTLY KNOWN FOR HIS SUBTLETY..."
HOW'S SHE DOING?
SHE'S... THEY'RE KEEPING HER SEDATED.
DO YOU HAVE ANY... ANY SUSPECTS YET?
WE'RE LOOKING AT A FEW PEOPLE, BUT WE HAVE TO BUILD A CASE BEFORE WE CAN MAKE ANY ARRESTS. OTHERWISE, IT'S ALL FOR NOTHING.
NOW, HAS EMILY SAID ANYTHING--?
NNAAAAAAHHHHH-
HUHH-
HUHH!
NO, HARRY.
ALL SHE'S DONE IS SCREAM.

DADDY?
DADDDYYYY!
I'M RIGHT HERE, BABY...
THESE DAMN THINGS--
HARRY-- NO!
THE NURSE SAID--!
I'M THE CHIEF OF POLICE, ELLEN...
...I CAN DO WHATEVER I WANT AND NOBODY'LL SAY TOO MUCH ABOUT IT.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M TELLING YOU?
THANK YOU, HARRY.

THREE MINUTES.
CHK!
EMILY?
I WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.
THE BOY--*CAMERON*--HE GOT HIMSELF INTO SOME *TROUBLE* ABOUT A YEAR AGO. HE...
...HE TRIED TO *FORCE HIMSELF ON A GIRL*. DON'T KNOW IF YOU *KNEW* HER OR NOT, BUT HER NAME WAS *MONICA BREZZI*...SHE AND HER FAMILY MOVED AWAY LAST YEAR.
ANYWAY, TURNS OUT THAT CAMERON WASN'T THE ONLY...WELL, SHE WASN'T EXACTLY INNOCENT, *EITHER*, OKAY? IT'S CONFUSING BUT, WHAT I'M SAYING IS...
EMILY, IF YOU *EVER* FEEL THAT YOU'RE IN DANGER, IT'S *PERFECTLY FINE* FOR YOU TO *DEFEND* YOURSELF, OKAY?
SO, *IF THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED*...AND I'D *COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND*, THEN--
THAT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENED.
OKAY.
THEN TELL ME WHAT *DID* HAPPEN.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY GREER'S OFFICE, HOW MAY I--?
IT'S HARRY.
PUT ROGER ON THE PHONE.
GOOD MORNING, HARRY--
NO, IT'S NOT.
I JUST GOT DONE TALKING TO EMILY STOUFFER.
WAS SHE ABLE TO DESCRIBE THE--
NO. THE ONLY THING SHE SAW WAS A "FLASH OF LIGHT"... AND SHE HEARD A "SOUND".
ARE WE TALKING ABOUT A GUNSHOT HERE, HARRY?
SHE SAID IT DEFINITELY WAS NOT A GUNSHOT.
THEN WHAT WAS IT?
SHE DOESN'T KNOW.
SO...SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING.
THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYING.
SO THERE'S NO NEED TO QUESTION HER FURTHER.
HARRY, I CAN'T--
WE LEAVE HER ALONE. IT'S A DEAD END. A WASTE OF TIME.
POLICE
HARRY, I GOTTA ASK... YOU'RE NOT, Y'KNOW, COVERING FOR THE BOY, ARE YOU?
HARRY...?
YOU AN' I GO BACK A LONG WAY, KEN, SO I'M GONNA FORGET YOU JUST ASKED ME THAT.

YEAH?
HARRY? THIS IS ARCHIE FAULKNER.
ARCHIE?
HEY, I'M BUSY WORKIN', OKAY? THERE'S NO WAY I'M MAKIN' IT OUT TO THE CLUB TODAY, SO--
JUST LISTEN, HARRY!
WE'RE PLAYIN', RIGHT? AN' DICKIE GOES AN' KNOCKS ONE INTO THE ROUGH ON THE SIXTH HOLE...THE DOGLEG LEFT?
NOTHING NEW ABOUT THAT...
YEAH, WELL, YOU KNOW HOW CHEAP DICKIE IS, RIGHT? SO, HE GOES IN THERE TO LOOK FOR HIS BALL AN' HE FINDS THIS FELLA SLEEPIN' IN THE BUSHES!
ARCHIE--
POLICE
THIS FELLA... HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY I.D. OR ANYTHING-- AND...
...AND HE'S GOT BLOOD ON HIS CLOTHES, HARRY.

WHAT'D HE SAY?
HE SAID HE'S ON HIS WAY...
...AN' TO KEEP THIS BUM RIGHT WHERE WE GOT 'IM.

SIT.
LOCKER NO. ~30
HEY, LEN.
I NEED TO HAVE A WORD WITH THIS FELLA IN PRIVATE, IF YOU DON'T MIND.
NO PROBLEM, HARRY.
..NO PROBLEM AT ALL.
THOSE OLD FELLAS REALLY ROUGHED YOU UP, HUH?
UH...N--
HEY, WHO CAN [redacted] 'EM? THEY'RE OLD MEN... I DON'T THINK ANYBODY'D HOLD IT AGAINST THEM.
ESPECIALLY WITH ALL THIS CRAZINESS GOING ON IN OUR [redacted]. I MEAN, THEY [redacted] A STRUNG-OUT DRIFTER HIDING IN THE BUSHES...
WITH BLOOD ON HIS CLOTHES..
NO-- LISTEN, OKAY?
THOSE GUYS DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO--
SURE THEY DID.

CHNK!
WHAT'S GOIN' [redacted] HERE, MAN? I MEAN, AM I [redacted] ARREST?
NOT YET.
[redacted] I'M... [redacted] TO GO, RIGHT?
YOU'RE FREE TO TRY.
LOOK, I DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE--
DROP THE WEAPON!
DO IT NOW!
YOU GUYS ALL [redacted] THAT, RIGHT?
WHAT?!
I DON'T HAVE A--
THWOK!

TCHOKK!
AW, HELL...
...HARRY'S GONNA KILL 'IM.
SEE THAT KNIFE? THAT'S YOURS.
NO...'S NOT MINE...
IT SURE IS--YOU PULLED IT OUTTA YOUR WAISTBAND AND CAME AT ME WITH IT.
NOW, WHY WOULD YOU DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
I'D SAY... IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE GUILTY.

WHERE'D THE BLOOD COME FROM?
I...I DON'T REMEM--
YEAH, YOU DO. WHERE?
GUESS IT'S MINE.
YOU GUESSED WRONG.
WHERE'S YOUR WOUNDS?
I DON'T... KNOW!
YOU...
DON'T...
...KNOW?
GGAHHHHH!

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
I--
HUH?
I KNOW THAT IF YOU KEEP BEATIN' ON ME, SOMETHIN' BAD IS GONNA HAPPEN.
AN' I'M NOT GONNA BE [redacted]... TO STOP IT.
OH, REALLY...
IS THAT HOW IT HAPPENS? YOU GET ALL WORKED UP... [redacted] YOU LOS[redacted] CONTROL?
IS THAT WHEN THE BAD THINGS HAPPEN?

HARRY?
HE'S AWAKE!
GO TELL THE REST OF THE GUYS!
WHAT'S... WHERE AM I?
WHAT HAPPENED?
WE WERE KINDA HOPING YOU COULD TELL US, SIR--THERE WAS SOME [redacted] EXPLOSION THERE AT THE COUNTRY CLUB, BUT THE FIRE MARSHALL CAN'T MAKE HEADS OR TAILS [redacted] IT.
ESPECIALLY SINCE...WELL, THE WHOLE LOCKER [redacted] WAS SCORCHED--THE HEAT FROM THE BLAST PRETTY MUCH MELTED ALL THE LOCKERS--AND THE OUTER WALL [redacted] BLOWN OUT...
I MEAN, YOUR UNIFORM, YOUR GUN AN' [redacted]...THEY WERE JUST COMPLETELY INCINERATED...IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY [redacted] BUT...
HARRY, YOU DON'T HAVE SO MUCH AS A BLISTER.
AN' THAT... THAT'S JUST WEIRD.

UM, I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD--
OKAY, WELL, WE [redacted] YOUR GYM BAG FROM THE STATION...THERE'S SOME CLOTHES IN THERE.
BUT I WOULDN'T RECOMMEND GOING OUT THE FRONT DOOR, OKAY? THERE'S REPORTERS ALL OVER THE PLACE OUT THERE.
REPORTERS?
YEAH.
THERE WAS ANOTHER ONE, HARRY...ANOTHER MURDER.
TWO OF 'EM, ACTUALLY.
TWO KIDS... TEENAGERS.
WITNESSES?
UH...YEAH. SEVERAL, IN FACT.
DESCRIPTION?
UMM...

OKAY...THERE WERE *THREE* ***WITNESSES*** AND ***TWO*** OF THEM WERE FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT THE SUSPECT WAS ***MALE.***
ALL *THREE* OF THEM, THOUGH, WERE ***ABSOLUTELY*** CERTAIN THAT THE SUSPECT'S ***HEAD*** WAS...
WAS, UH...
ON FIRE?
OKAY...IS *EVERYTHING* GONNA BE WEIRD TODAY? BECAUSE, I MEAN, HOW DID YOU ***KNOW*** THAT?
HARRY...?

STEVIE?
LEVINS
STEVIE, C-COULD YOU PLEASE UNTIE MY H-HANDS?
I'D LIKE TO PRAY.
NOT NOW, "MA".
I'VE HAD A *REALLY* BUSY DAY, AND I *JUST* WANNA WATCH A *LITTLE* TV.
SLEEPY HOLLOW MURDERS
CONY
To Be Continued...

GHOST WRITERS

Oh, hell! All of you faithful Flameheads who e-mailed us last month got your letters bounced right back at you. I don't know what sinister force was responsible for screwing up our system, but I wouldn't be surprised if Lucifer himself had thrown a monkey wrench in our gears just to screw with you guys and gals. He certainly hasn't been too pleased about all the attention Ghost Rider has been getting in this letter column and might have decided to do something about it. Regardless, the demons have been exorcised from the e-mail system and you can reach us again (as usual) at SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM. If you sent in an e-mail after getting your mind blown open by issue #7, please send it in again so that we can give it the attention it deserves. Fortunately, we've got enough letters from fans who wrote in around the time of issue #6 to keep "Ghost Writers" up and running this month. Take that, Lucifer!

To the Ghost Rider Team,

Although we're only at issue #6, I can't contain my gratitude that my all-time favorite Ghost Rider, the man called Johnny Blaze, is back as the Spirit of Vengeance. There is absolutely no substitute. I followed the Danny Ketch version and he could not measure up to his "brother." Johnny is the one true Ghost Rider, hands down. Fans who have read his original stories from #66 right to the last issue of #81 know what I'm talking about: great stories by J.M. DeMatteis and fantastic pencils by Bob Budiansky, who drew Zarathos to look as evil and creepy as any artist could today (not to knock Javier Saltares and Mark Texeira, who both do a great job on this book). I am a LONGTIME fan of Ghost Rider and I cannot wait to see how you carry on this latest version of Johnny's run.

How long have I been a fan? Since the *Marvel Spotlight* 1972 appearance. I can't help but bring up what has been going on in this letters page lately about what is THE #1 Ghost Rider. I won't say that I am THE #1, but I feel I rank high on that scale. I don't have tattoos of Ghost Rider, clothing and GR's likeness, but I own them, nor do I own a large collection of the 1990s action figures (although I have a few displayed on a shelf in my home office). BUT how many readers can boast to own almost EVERY book with GR's appearance?

I am only missing three books: a Marvel Grab Bag and two giveaways that were only available to U.S. residents (NATO). Otherwise, I have the absolute most complete chronicle of Johnny Blaze and Danny Ketch, every issue of Marvel Spotlight and complete runs of the four Ghost Rider series. I managed to find all seventeen issues of *The Champions* (even though GR wasn't in #5 and 6), a team I felt never got a chance to grow, even if it meant shaking the members line-up. There were appearances in the *Human Fly*, *Marvel Premiere*, *Marvel Two-In-One* and *Team-Up*. I could go on, but that would just be rambling. I managed to get them all before the 1990 relaunch.

I became a fan because Ghost Rider was different. An evil-looking flaming skeleton with biker leather riding a motorcycle of hellfire that could defy gravity… he was so different that you couldn't help but pick up one of his comics and find out what he was all about. Hulk, Spider-Man, the FF and X-Men… not one of those characters interested me after I discovered Ghost Rider.

Now it has come full circle. Johnny is back in the hellfire saddle and my son has become a GR fan too, anxiously awaiting the new line of action figures we were told are being released with the movie. You people at Marvel have brought back a great character and I will be there every step of the way. Only once did I ever hope for a run to be cancelled (the *Blaze* series after issue #6), but I doubt I would do that again after so long of a wait to have Johnny back. Keep up the fantastic work!

In the classic way to end this..."Make Mine Marvel!"....and Ghost Rider!

Chris Granger
Cornwall, Ontario

***Chris, any fan ready to wear a Flamehead mask for Halloween already gets major points in that impossible-to-judge contest of GREATEST GHOST RIDER FAN OF ALL TIME. And as if that weren't enough, it sounds like you've got one hell of a collection of GR issues. Hopefully, you'll turn your house into a Ghost Rider Museum one of these days so that those Flameheads less fortunate can witness the glory (and sometimes the shame) of Ghostie's illustrious publishing career. Thanks for sharing, my friend, and we'll do our best to make this book better than* Blaze.**

Ghost Writers,

I am soooooooooo happy to see Ghost Rider back in action! I had given up hope that my favorite flame-topped hero was ever going to grace the pages of a Marvel creation again. Sure, the Garth Ennis miniseries whet my appetite briefly, but it was just a reminder that Ghost Rider had become a passing memory to most; a fiery vision of power and beauty that had been recalled lavishly by Ennis and then had been put to the side for more "popular" stories and characters.

But then, just for the hell of it, I recently decided to visit my local comic store, and, lo and behold, Ghost Rider was staring at me from the wall-side rack. I'm twenty-seven years old, so I tried not to dance and sing and make a complete fool of myself (I did this later in the comfort of my own home), but the excitement made me jittery all over. I was overjoyed also, upon reading, that the storyline is terrific and Ghost Rider's badassness has remained intact.

The fact that Lucifer is his target is great, too—the devil is probably the only entity that can give Blaze a real fight. Anyway, thank you so much for bringing Ghost Rider back; it's like the kid in me has started smiling again!

Nathan Heite

Nathan, if the kid in you can smile again, then our job is done. At least, until next month.

Hello,

I am a huge fan from France. Thanks for bringing Ghost Rider back! He is my favorite Marvel superhero.

I hope you will enjoy the picture I drew of him.

Best,
Eric Esculier
Paris, France

Eric, I love it! Thanks for letting us share this piece with your fellow Flameheads. It's an especially great complement to the first story in our "Sleepy Hollow" arc!

Ghost Rider Staff,

I've been a fan of Richard Corben's art from *Hellblazer* and *Punisher: The End* but this was his best stuff ever! I couldn't urge the Ghost Rider staff enough to convince this guy to hang around as the regular artist; at least let the man do the covers. Completely stellar!

Scott Wilson
San Francisco, CA

Scott, we were very lucky to get a comics legend like Richard Corben onboard for our special two-part story. While we'd love to keep him around, Richard's a very busy guy with a lot of projects in the works. In fact, keep your eyes open for another installment of Corben's* Haunt of Horror *coming soon.

Dear Ghost Rider crew,

Hi. I've been a huge fan of Ghost Rider ever since I was a young teen, when I would read the 90's series with Danny Ketch. The stories were awesome and so was the art, and I was sad when the series ended. I credit Ghost Rider with starting my interest in anti-heroes and getting me interested in the supernatural.

Now, years later, I was at a train station going to New York and walked into a newsstand. There, with the rest of the comics, was *Ghost Rider #2*, where GR was fighting Lucifer. I was hooked once again to my favorite comic. I'm glad that the Ghost Rider's back and I'll keep buying them. So far, I've got issues #2-5, because I didn't know that the GR comics were returning, but now that they're back, I won't miss an issue.

May Ghost Rider continue on his quest for vengeance and may his flame never burn out again.

Athena Lee Moore
New Haven, CT

A lot of people are rediscovering Ghost Rider by accident this month. Apparently, this book is the best kept secret in the market! Let's not keep it that way, Flameheads. Tell your friends, tell your neighbors, tell your post-man's sister's twice-removed stepbrother's cousin! Let's get the word out on the street that the Ghost Rider has returned and he's bringing "badassness" back with him.

-Michael

ADAM ROSENLUND
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